



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

Mister, Mister!

Sgt. Scott Monahan, from Medway, Mass., a tactical human intelligence team leader with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, collects an entourage of children while on a civil affairs mission in the Rabi area of Adhamiyah, Baghdad Feb. 19. (See story page 4)

Gunmen can't stop medical operation

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie
2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs

AL TARAQ, Iraq - Terrorists commonly use scare tactics to disrupt the everyday lives of others; however, their tactics were unsuccessful during a recent medical operation.

Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment and the 210th Brigade

Support Battalion, both units of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), conducted a medical operation at the Ahmed Suhel School in Al Taraq, Iraq Feb. 22.

Although the school offered a comfortable atmosphere, terrorists tried to disrupt the day's activities with small arms fire and a rocket-propelled grenade attack.

But the medical operation continued

and Iraqis still received care.

"If we shut this down then the terrorist would have won," said Capt. Shane Finn, the commander of Company C, 4-31st and native of Clinton, N.Y. "All they are trying to do is stop the operation - and they are not going to do that."

Local residents nationals were seen

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Communicators keep cavalry connected

By Pfc. William Hatton
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - There is one thing that Soldiers, from private to general, rely on daily while deployed. When this one thing goes down it is instantly noticed. It is typically taken for granted. This one thing of critical importance is communication.

Soldiers from Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, have been working hard since the beginning of the deployment insuring that the communication link throughout the division stays connected.

The communication system is made up of various satellites and antennas linked together which provide internet, email, and phone services, said Maj. Steve Maddry, company commander with Co. A.

A lot of things go into keeping a system of phone and internet services running, said Maddry, a native of Natchitoches, La.

"We provide services that are on par to commercial companies back in the states," said Maddry.

After getting the system running, things have continually change since arriving in Iraq, said Sgt. Andrew Rawlings, a multi-channel transmission systems operator and maintainer



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton 7th MPAD)

Spc. Eric Moretti, with Co. A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., performs maintenance checks on a satellite system which provides internet and phone services to Soldiers on Camp Liberty, Iraq Feb. 22. with Co. A. Things have changed within the system because of advancements in technology, he added.

"I basically monitor and make sure everything runs smoothly," said Rawlings, a native of Orange, Va.

When coming in for the day, various checks and inspections are performed on the

monitoring devices and different antennas used in the system, Rawlings said. Throughout the day everything is checked and checked again.

"Maintaining 24-hour operations and ensuring the quality of the connections is probably one of the hardest parts of the job," Maddry said.

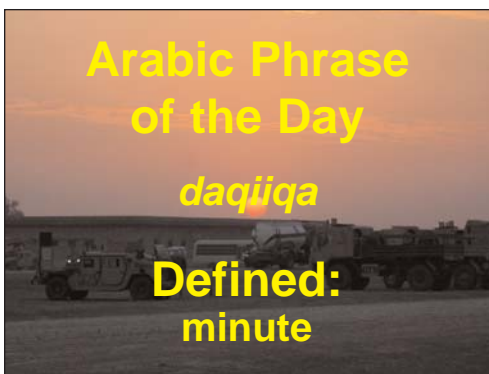
"One part of maintaining things is to fill generators with fuel," Spc. Eric Moretti, a satellite communication operator and maintainer with Co. A. Fueling the generators is one of the most important parts of operating, he said, because the system won't run with out power.




As the communication system is maintained and runs smoothly a great deal of enjoyment comes from knowing Soldiers throughout the division are communicating properly.

"My job is basically customer satisfaction by making sure everybody is happy, that everyone is talking, and able to e-mail," Rawlings said.

"Something that makes us feel good is knowing that we're technically proficient in our jobs and know that if something happened, we'd know how to handle the situation," said Moretti, a native of Newburgh, N.Y.

As Soldiers on Camp Liberty e-mail and talk to one another on the phone, behind the scene are Soldiers keeping the connection alive.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Wednesday
High: 73 Low: 55	High: 70 Low: 52	High: 70 Low: 52	

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(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler 4-25 Inf. Public Affairs)

The kids are having a ball!

Maj. James Ortoli gives out soccer balls to Iraqi children during a brief stop after visiting one of the agricultural unions of local Iraqi sheiks in a village near Iskandariyah, Iraq. Ortoli is a member of a civil affairs team working with the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

The operation must go on

Gunmen

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from everything from coughs to burns, but some cases could not be treated with basic medical care.

Seventy-five received treatment. No one was injured during the terrorist attack.

"I am very happy that the Americans have helped me," said Kaild Hamed, an Iraqi teen, as he watched Williams bandage his wound. "They do a good job and they are my friends."

Soldiers taking part in the mission understand the importance of medical operations.

"We live in Al Taraq and have a small aid station here," said Pfc. Chadwick Williams, a native of Spokane, Wash., who serves as a medic

with 4-31.

"Every day there are people who come to our aid station requesting medical care, but since I am not a doctor I cannot do too much for them. It is good to have medical operations because there are doctors on site to treat the Iraqis," he said.

The site selection for medical operations is also important.

"We chose to have the medical operation at the school so that we could get people comfortable with being at the school," said 1st Sgt. David Simpson, the senior noncommissioned officer with Co. C, 4-31st and a native of Des Moines, Iowa. "The school offers a friendlier atmosphere for these types of operations."

The unit is planning more medical operations in the area.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie 2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs)

Pfc. Chadwick Williams, with the 4th Bn., 31st Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., treats an Iraqi boy during a medical operation in Al Taraq, Iraq Feb. 22.

Troops build foundation of trust in Adhamiyah

**By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs**

BAGHDAD - There is no such thing as fast food at Abu Muhanned's house.

Lunch starts with a tray of chocolates, cigarettes, and conversation. A half hour later, tables are brought in and platters of food arrive.

"My wife was up all night cooking this," Muhanned says proudly, as he spoons out huge plates of rice, chicken, and vegetables.

Muhanned, a jovial man in his fifties with a white mustache and a protruding belly, makes sure everyone gets their fill, and then some. When one guest waves off a third helping, Muhanned stuffs a banana in his pocket for later.

As the tables are being cleared, he summons a pitcher of sweet, steaming chai tea from the kitchen. Only when the tea is finished is it finally time to get down to business. Casually, Muhanned tells his guests - all paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division - that he has information to give them about a violent kidnapping.

It is the kind of information often gained from raids or tactical questioning, not handed out over tea and chocolate. But in Baghdad's Adhamiyah security district, paratroopers from the 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment are learning to fight a new

kind of battle, where diplomacy and dialogue are as effective as force.

Based at Combat Outpost War Eagle in Rabi, the 2-319th "Black Falcons" are targeting insurgents, criminals, and violent militia groups with direct action, while simultaneously trying to win over the population by building up the local infrastructure, economy and political institutions.

"Our traditional Soldier tasks, that's our night job," said 1st Lt. Josh Rowan, of College Station, Texas, a platoon leader with B Battery, 2-319 AFAR. "During the day, we have to be police officers and diplomats."

It's a balancing act that Rowan compared to "walking a tight rope on a piece of fishing wire," but it's one 2-319 paratroopers have had to quickly adapt to since arriving in Adhamiyah in early February. The battalion was part of the "surge" of forces pushed into the capital to implement the new Baghdad security plan.

The combined approach is one of the basic principles of counter-insurgency theory, said 1st Lt. Brook Carrier, the battalion's civil military operations officer. Rowan's long lunch at Muhanned's house Feb. 19 was a typical example of how small-unit leaders in the 2-319th are applying the theory out in the streets and mulhallas, neighborhoods, of Adhamiyah.

Rather than appearing silently out of the

dark, as they would on a combat operation, Rowan's paratroopers arrived like celebrities hitting the red carpet. As soon as they dismounted their trucks, they were surrounded by an entourage of singing, clapping, and cheering children.

The boisterous crowd followed the paratroopers down winding roads until they reached Muhanned's house. Muhanned is the chairman of the Rabi Neighborhood Advisory Council. The local NACs are one of the political institutions the Black Falcons want to empower, and Muhanned, a Shiite married to a Sunni and a vocal critic of militia groups in the area, is a man with a lot of influence.

"He's kind of like the mayor of Rabi," said Rowan.

The purpose of the lunch was to discuss plans for a new school, a clinic, and a bridge linking Rabi with a neighborhood across the Tigris River. The projects serve an obvious humanitarian need. But they also have strategic importance, both for the Black Falcons and Muhanned. The underlying goal of the projects for the Black Falcons is to help win the loyalty of the people to the Iraqi government and undermine the insurgency's power base by supplying jobs. Muhanned has his own political agenda to serve, which would be furthered by bringing development to Rabi.

"Everyone sitting in there had a vested interest," said Rowan.

But those motivations remained hidden under the surface during lunch. Instead, it was an hour of mostly polite chit chat and good food. Yet that hour laid the groundwork for making progress on a dizzying array of objectives.

"On the surface, the talking, the eating, the tea - all that may seem like a huge waste of time. But in order to get to that point where (an Iraqi) trusts you enough to give you information, you have to build a relationship," said Rowan.

In the end, the success of the Black Falcons' mission will depend as much on the strength of such relationships as it will on how many raids they conduct or rounds they fire.

"This is going to be the big factor in how Iraq is going to turn out in the next five years," said Staff Sgt. Antonio Alverado, a squad leader with B Battery. "We have to make an impact,"



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

1st Lt. Josh Rowan (l.), Capt. William LeFever, an interpreter; and Abu Muhanned, the chairman of the Neighborhood Advisory Council in Rabi, Adhamiyah, perform a reconnaissance on the site where they hope to build a bridge across the Tigris River Feb. 19.

Soldier sees need for shoes, students respond

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD - Sick of seeing Iraqis walking through the war-torn neighborhoods of Iraq's capital without shoes, he wondered what one Soldier could do to help cover the naked feet of so many.

Then it came to Lt. Col. Robert Colfer, who teaches history to 9th, 10th and 11th graders at Marblehead High School, of Marblehead, Mass., when not activated from the Army Reserve - get his students involved.

"Shoes for Iraqis" was born.

"Last spring I got in touch with some of my students after driving out in sector and seeing a lot of kids without shoes. I thought that a shoe drive would be a good thing," said the native of Newbury, Mass. "I already knew a lot of kids who were interested in this type of thing. I contacted them and found some volunteer students who agreed to honcho a shoe-drive effort."

Colfer, who is an intelligence advisor for the military transition team assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, said the shoe drive has more than exceeded his expectations.

At the start of the school year in August, organizers of the drive had collected 200 pairs of shoes. By October the number was 450. A couple of months later, 2,200 pairs of shoes were ready to be shipped to Iraq for its shoeless citizens, Colfer said.

The shoe drive was so successful its



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

An Iraqi Army soldier with 2nd Bn., 3rd Bde., 6th IA Div. unloads a box of shoes at a Girl's School in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib district Feb. 15.

organizers faced the challenge of shipping a mountain of shoes. The community of Marblehead banded together and started contributing. Fund raisers worked with the Veteran's of Foreign Wars of Marblehead, Colfer said. However, the cost was so great the drive's organizers spread word of the need for monetary support.

"This was publicized. The story was out there that the school was struggling to raise shipping costs and an anonymous donor walked into the high school and wrote a check for \$1,433 and walked out," Colfer explained.

Thanks to the anonymous contributor, the organizers had the funds to ship the shoes

and immediately employed teams of students to fill boxes.

Colfer and his fellow Soldiers placed the shoes in family-sized bags and then supervised their distribution by Iraqi Army soldiers in their Baghdad sector, he said.

"The important thing is that they see the Iraqi Army doing this. Before we go out all of the H-Aid (humanitarian assistance) and shoes are loaded onto Iraqi Army trucks, so it's the Iraqi Army distributing it," Colfer said. "They see their own soldiers handing things out, and really all the IA is asking for is a little cooperation and a little trust. I think with things like this, a little goes a long way."

Distributing the shoes is also a benefit in the mission to gather intelligence. Colfer and his unit put tip cards in many of the shoes for Iraqis, so they can share pertinent information with the Iraqi security forces, he said.

"I think you're planting a seed. I think the great thing here is all the Iraqi Army is asking for is a little cooperation and a little trust," Colfer said.

The immediate practical benefit of distributing shoes may be outweighed by the gesture's effect in gradually changing the minds of the Iraqi people about the Iraqi Army, Colfer said.

"I've got the easy part. I just had the idea. I successfully drafted from some students and they went to town with it," said the teacher and Soldier, who will return to his teaching duties after demobilizing. "It's been a good thing for everybody."



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